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Jeff Koons Sued Yet Again Over Copyright Infringement

Henri Neuendorf, Tuesday, December 15, 2015



Jeff Koons

Photo: J Grassi/ Patrick McMullan.

[Jeff Koons](#) is in trouble over copyright infringement, yet again. On Monday, New York photographer Mitchel Gray filed a lawsuit in Manhattan federal court over Koons' 1986 artwork *I Could Go For Something Gordon's*, from his series "Luxury & Degradation." Gray claimed that Koons used his original 1986 photograph—which depicts a woman painting on the beach, with a man sitting beside her—“nearly unchanged and in its entirety” to create his *I Could Go For Something Gordon's* piece.



Jeff Koons, *I Could Go For Something Gordon's* (1986).

Photo: via jeffkoons.com

[According to Reuters](#), the photographer alleges that Koons used the image without his permission after the campaign ran in 1986. Two editions and one artist's proof were produced.

Besides Koons, Gray is also suing the auction house Phillips, which—according to the [New York Post](#)—sold the artist's proof in 2008 in London for \$2.04 million, as well as the unnamed former owner of the work.

According to the complaint, Gray took almost 30 years to file the suit because he only discovered Koons' plagiarism this past July. Gray's attorney said the case falls within the three-year statute of limitation on copyright actions, which only starts counting when "the plaintiff learns of the infringement."

The photographer is seeking unspecified damages, plus any profits made by the defendants as a result of the alleged copyright infringement.



Photographer Mitchel Gray claims Jeff Koons infringed his copyright.

Photo: Mitchel Gray via Facebook.

Gray's lawsuit stressed that Koons "knew, or should have known, that he was required to obtain an artist's permission before he could lawfully copy a work by that artist."

Meanwhile, Phillips spokesman Michael Sherman told *Reuters* via email: "We are confident that Phillips has no liability in this matter."

Koons has been at the center of several copyright infringement cases over the years. [In 1992, he lost a case over his sculpture \*String of Puppies\* \(1988\)](#). In 1993, he lost again in a case over the appropriation of the *Garfield* character "Odie" in *Wild Boy and Puppy* (1988).



Koons was found guilty of plagiarism in 1992 for copying a photographer's image in his sculpture *String of Puppies* (1988).

Photo: via [copyrightvisualarts.wordpress.com](http://copyrightvisualarts.wordpress.com)

In 2006, he won a case brought against him by fashion photographer Andrea Blanch, over his use of her [image featuring the feet of four women wearing Gucci sandals](#) in his work *Niagara* (2000).

In December 2014, [Koons was sued twice within two weeks](#), first over his work *Fait d'Hiver* (1988)—which French advertising executive Franck Davidovici claimed Koons copied from a 1985 advertisement for a French clothing brand—and then by the wife of photographer Jean-François Bauret over the [illegal use of her husband's work in Koons' sculpture \*Naked\* \(1988\)](#).